

## The Sixty-four Destructions according to the *Samskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya*

### A. Introduction

Among the Sthavira tenets cited by Daśabalaśrīmitra in his *Samskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya*, which is preserved only in Tibetan translation, is a passage in prose and verse on the “sixty-four destructions” of the world or universe.<sup>1</sup> The citation occurs in Chapter 8, “Analysis of the Aeon” (*Kalpa-viniścaya*).<sup>2</sup> I have not been able to trace an *exact* counterpart of the passage in Pāli, although the prose is close to that of a number of texts, such as the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*. The verse is very close to one cited without attribution (or ascribed to the “old masters”: *ten’ āhu porāṇā*)<sup>3</sup> in later Pāli works such as the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*, *Sārasaṅgaha*,<sup>4</sup> *Lokadīpakasāra*,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For Daśabalaśrīmitra and his work see Peter Skilling, “The *Samskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya* of Daśabalaśrīmitra”, *Buddhist Studies Review* vol. 4, no. 1 (1987), pp. 3–23, and “Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation”, *JPTS* XIX (1993), pp. 140–42.

<sup>2</sup>Title from end of chapter: Peking Tanjur (Q) 43a6, Derge Tanjur (D) 140a5, *bskal pa rnam par ñes pa ste* (Q: *ñes bya ba* for *ste*, D) *l’eu brgyad pa’o*.

<sup>3</sup>For the “old masters” or “ancients”, see E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1953, Appendix II.

<sup>4</sup>Genjun H. Sasaki (ed.), *Sārasaṅgaha*, Oxford, 1992, p. 314,20–21. Sasaki notes the occurrence of the verse in the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*, *Suttasaṅgaha-aṭṭhakathā*, and *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-sanne*.

<sup>5</sup>Phra Saṅgharāja Medhaṅkara, *Lokadīpakasāra*, National Library, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, B.E. 2529 [1986], p. 513,5–6.

*Mahākappalokasaṇṭhānapaññatti*,<sup>1</sup> and *Aruṇavatīsūtra*.<sup>2</sup> The first two works were composed at Pulatthinagara (Polonnaruwa) in Ceylon: the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī* by Sumaṅgala in the 12th century,<sup>3</sup> and the *Sārasaṅgaha* by Siddhattha at about the beginning of the 14th century.<sup>4</sup> The *Lokadīpakasāra* was composed by Medhaṅkara Mahāthera at “Muttamanagara, known as Siriratanapura” (present-day Martaban) in Rāmaññadesa in the 14th century.<sup>5</sup> The dates and provenance of the *Mahākappalokasaṇṭhānapaññatti* and *Aruṇavatīsūtra* are unknown; the latter is a non-canonical Pāli sutta, perhaps from Siam of the Ayutthaya period. The verse is cited in Pāli in a Thai cosmological text, *Description of the Three Worlds (Traibhūmikathā)*, traditionally held to have been composed by Phya Lithai in the mid-14th century in the Kingdom of Sukhothai (Sukhodaya).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mahākappalokasaṇṭhānapaññatti*, typescript “transcribed from the palm-leaf MS. in the Royal Library at Bangkok, for the use of Professor Sylvain Levy (sic), by order of H.R.H. the Prince of Chandaburi. Bangkok, 1926”, p. 5.22–23.

<sup>2</sup> *Aruṇavatīsūtra* in *Lokupatti Aruṇavatīsūtra Paṭhamamūla Paṭhamakaplae mūlatantraiy*, National Library, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, B.E. 2533 [1990], p. 52.7–8.

<sup>3</sup> Sasaki, p. ix.

<sup>4</sup> Sasaki, pp. vii–viii.

<sup>5</sup> *Lokadīpakasāra*, p. 61.7.6 (colophon); B.C. Law, *The History of the Buddha's Religion (Sāsanavaṃsa)*, 1st ed. Calcutta, 1952; reprint Delhi, 1986, pp. 53, 56.

<sup>6</sup> *Traibhūmikathā ru traibhūmiphraung*, Fine Arts Department, BE 2526 [1983], p. 139; translated by Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology*; (Berkeley, 1982), p. 306; translated by G. Cœdès and C. Archaimbault, *Les Trois Mondes* (Paris: École Française de l'Extrême-Orient, 1973), pp. 216–17.

The theory is the same as that of the Vaibhāṣikas, as outlined in the *Lokaprajñapti* and presented in detail in the *Abhidharmakośa*, *Abhidharmadīpa*, and *Sārasamuccaya*.<sup>1</sup>

The present article gives translations (Part B) and texts (Part C) of Daśabalaśrīmitra's citation, along with relevant passages from the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*, *Visuddhimagga*, *Lokaprajñapti* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

## B. Translations

### 1. *Samskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya*

According to the system of the *Āgama*<sup>2</sup> of the Ārya Śthavira school (*nikāya*), there are sixty-four destructions (*saṃvatta*) [of the world]. Therein, there are fifty-six destructions by fire, seven destructions by water, and one destruction by wind, in this manner:

- (1) there are seven destructions by fire in succession (*nirantaram*), [then] one by water;
- (2) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (3) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (4) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (5) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (6) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (7) after that, seven by fire, one by water;
- (8) after that, seven by fire, and one destruction by wind.

<sup>1</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, Patna, 1977, pp. 116–17; *Sārasamuccaya-nāma-abhidharmāvatāra-ṭīkā*, Q5598, Vol. 119, *mñon pa thu*, 354b5–8. See below for the *Lokaprajñapti* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

<sup>2</sup> *lung* = *āgama*: from the style of this and other citations it is clear that Daśabalaśrīmitra uses *āgama* in the sense of “tradition” or “authoritative text”, rather than of “canonical text” in the sense of one of the four *Āgamas* (equivalent to the first four *Nikāyas* of the Pāli canon).

Thus there are altogether sixty-four destructions.<sup>1</sup> Further, it is stated:

After each seven turns by fire  
each eighth [turn] is by water:  
when the one final [turn] by wind is counted  
the sixty-four [destructions] are complete.

## 2. *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*

In this manner the world is destroyed seven turns by fire, and the eighth turn by water; then again seven turns by fire, and the eighth turn by water: in this manner eight groups of eight are completed when [the world] is destroyed for a final turn by water. ... Further, this is stated:

Seven times seven turns by fire  
each eighth [turn] by water:  
the sixty-four [destructions] are complete  
when there is one final [turn] by wind. 2

## 3. *Visuddhimagga*<sup>3</sup>

[The world] is destroyed for seven turns in succession by fire and the eighth turn by water; then again seven turns by fire and the eighth by water, and when it has been seven times destroyed by water at each eighth turn, it is again destroyed for seven turns by fire. Sixty-three æons pass in this way. And now the air takes the opportunity to usurp the water's turn for destruction, and in destroying the world it

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (Nālandā ed.) I 183,15, *ekasmim kappe catusaṭṭhi antarakappā nāma honti*.

<sup>2</sup> The translation by Coëdès and Archaimbault changes the number in the Pāli from sixty-three to sixty-four: "Sept fois [vient] le feu, la huitième fois c'est l'eau. [Ainsi] jusqu'à soixante-quatre fois; le vent vient seulement une fois."

<sup>3</sup> Translation from Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga) by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, 3rd ed. (Kandy, 1975), Chapter XIII ¶65 (p. 463).

demolishes the Subhakiṇḥa Brahmā World where the life-span is the full sixty-four æons.

## 4. *Lokaprajñapti*

There are three destructions: destruction by fire, destruction by water, and destruction by wind. ... There are seven destructions by fire, and one by water; there are seven destructions by water, and one by wind.

## 5. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*

In what sequence do these destructions occur? In succession, "Seven by fire": there are seven destructions by fire. Then, "One by water": immediately after seven destructions by fire, there is one destruction by water. "When seven [destructions] by water have occurred in this manner, again seven by fire": when seven destructions by water have occurred in this sequence, then there are seven destructions by fire. "After which there is the destruction by wind": after that there is one destruction by wind. ... There are fifty-six destructions by fire, seven destructions by water, one destruction by wind: thus the *Prajñaptibhāṣya* statement that "the life-span of the Śubhakarṣna gods is sixty-four æons" is correctly interpreted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lokaprajñapti*, Q5597, Vol. 115, *mñon pa khu 19a3 dge rgyas kyi lha rnam kyi tshē'i tshad kyi mtha' ni bskal pa drug cu rtsa bži ste*. Cf. *Sārasamuccaya*, *thu 354b7 de ltar byas na gdags pa bśad pa las dge rgyas kyi lha rnam kyi tshē bskal pa drug cu rtsa bži thub bo žes bya ba legs par bśad pa yin no*.

## C. Texts

1. *Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya*<sup>1</sup>

'phags pa gnas brtan pa'i sde pa'i luṅ gi tshul las kyañ  
'jig pa ni drug cu rtsa bži ste/ de la mes 'jig pa lña bcu rtsa  
drug go/<sup>2</sup> chus 'jig pa ni bdun no// rluṅ gis 'jig pa ni gcig go/  
'di lta ste/ bar med par mes 'jig pa bdun no// chus gcig go/ de  
nas mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// chus  
gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun  
no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas  
mes bdun no// chus gcig go/ de nas mes bdun no// rluṅ gis  
'jig pa ni gcig go/ de ltar bsduṣ te 'jig pa ni drug cu bži'o//  
yañ gsuṅs te/

me yis lan ni bdun bdun la// brgyad pa brgyad pa chu yis  
so//

gañ tshe rluṅ mchog gcig bgraṅs na// drug cu bži ni  
rdzogs par 'gyur//

žes so//<sup>3</sup>

2. *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*<sup>4</sup>

tathā hesa loko sattavāresu agginā vinassati aṭṭhame vāre  
udakena, puna sattavāresu agginā aṭṭhame vāre udakenā ti  
evam pi aṭṭhasu aṭṭhakesu paripuṇṇesu pacchime vāre vātena  
vinassati ... vuttam pi c' etam

<sup>1</sup>Daśabalaśrīmitra (sTobs bcu dpal bśes gñen), 'Dus byas dan 'dus ma  
byas rnam par nes pa, Peking (Q) 5865, Vol. 146, no mtshar bstan bcos  
ño, 24a1–5; Derge (D) 3897, Vol. 108, dbu ma ha, 124b2–5.

<sup>2</sup>go / Q : go // D, throughout.

<sup>3</sup>Lines a and b are identical to the Pāli: me yis = agginā; lan = vārā;  
bdun bdun la = satta satta; brgyad pa brgyad pa = aṭṭhame aṭṭhame;  
chu yis so = odakā. Line c has one variant: gañ tshe = yadā; rluṅ mchog  
= vāyuvaro; gcig = eko; but bgraṅs = "counted" rather than siyā. In line  
d, drug cu bži = catusaṭṭhī; rdzogs par 'gyur = puṇṇā.

<sup>4</sup>Thai script edition, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgahapāliya saha abhi-  
dhammatthavibhāvinī nāma abhidhammatthasaṅgahatīkā*, Mahāmakūṭa-  
rājavidyālaya, Bangkok BE 2516 [1973], Chapter 5, p. 162, 10–17.

satta sattagginā vārā aṭṭhame aṭṭhamodakā  
catusaṭṭhī yadā puṇṇā eko vāyuvaro siyā.

3. *Visuddhimagga*<sup>1</sup>

evam vinassanto pi ca niran-taram eva satta vāre agginā  
vinassati (Mm: *nassati* HOS) aṭṭhame vāre udakena, puna  
satta vāre agginā, aṭṭhame vāre udakenā ti evam aṭṭhame  
aṭṭhame vāre vinassanto sattakkhattum udakena vinassitvā  
puna satta vāre agginā vinassati (Mm: *nassati* HOS). ettāvātā  
tesaṭṭhī kappā atītā honti. etth' antare udakena nassanavāram  
sampattam pi paṭibāhitvā laddhokāso vāto paripuṇṇacatu-  
saṭṭhikappāyuke subhakiṇhe viddham-sento lokaṃ vināseti.

4. *Lokaprajñapti*<sup>2</sup>

'jig pa ni rnam pa gsum ste, mes 'jig pa dan, chus 'jig pa  
dan, rluṅ gis 'jig pa'o ... mes 'jig pa lan bdun žiñ chus 'jig  
pa lan cig, chus 'jig pa lan bdun žiñ rluṅ gis 'jig pa lan cig  
'byuñ ño.

5. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*<sup>3</sup>

kena punaḥ krameṇaitāḥ saṃvartanyo bhavanti? niran-  
taram tāvat *saptāgninā* sapta saṃvartanyas tejasā bhavanti.

<sup>1</sup>Henry Clarke Warren and Dharmananda Kosambi (eds.), *Visuddhimagga  
of Buddhaghosācariya* (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 41, 1950; reprint  
Delhi, 1989), Chap. XIII, ¶65, p. 356,8–14 (= HOS); Thai script edition,  
*Visuddhimagga nāma pakaraṇavisesassa dutiyo bhāgo*, 5th ed.,  
Mahāmakūṭarājavidyālaya, Bangkok, B.E. 2515 [1972], p. 269,7–14 (= Mm). The prose is incorporated into the *Sārasaṅgaha* (p. 314,8–16) and  
*Lokadīpakasāra* (p. 512,25–13,3).

<sup>2</sup>'Jig rten bžag pa, Q5597, Vol. 115, mñon pa khu, 54b4–7.

<sup>3</sup>P. Pradhan (ed.), *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*, (revised 2nd  
ed.) Patna, 1975, 191,6–18; Swami Dwarikadas Shastri (ed.), *Abhi-  
dharmakośa & Bhāṣya of Acharya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārthā  
Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra*, Part II, Varanasi, 1971, pp. 565,4–  
566. See also Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa de  
Vasubandhu*, tome II, reprinted Brussels, 1971, pp. 216–17. The text of  
*Kośakārikā* III, 102 is given in bold type.

tataḥ *adbhir ekā* saptānāṃ tejaḥsaṃvartanīnāṃ anantaram  
adbhiḥ saṃvartanī bhavati. *evaṃ gate 'dbhiḥ saptake punaḥ,*  
*tejasā saptakaḥ* etena krameṇāpsaṃvartanīnāṃ gate saptake  
punaḥ tejaḥsaṃvartanīnāṃ saptako bhavati. *paścād vāyu-*  
*saṃvartanī tataḥ* paścād ekā vāyusaṃvartanī bhavati. ...  
ṣaṭpañcāśat tejaḥsaṃvartanyaḥ saptāpsaṃvartanyaḥ ekā  
vāyusaṃvartanī. *evaṃ ca prajñaptibhāṣyaṃ sunītaṃ* bhavati  
catuḥṣaṣṭi kalpāḥ śubhakṛtsnānāṃ devānāṃ āyuhḥpramāṇam  
iti.

Nandapurī

Peter Skilling

## Intermediate Existence and the Higher Fetters in the Pāli Nikāyas

This article concerns what the Pāli Nikāyas have to say about the *antarāparinibbāyin* non-returners and their desire for existence and the life in an intermediate existence.<sup>1</sup> I shall argue that this material casts doubt on a major point of Theravāda orthodoxy.

The following are the four noble persons presented in Pali Buddhism:

1. The stream-enterer (*sotāpanno*)
2. The once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*)
3. The non-returner (*anāgāmi*)
4. The arahant (*araham*) (S V 200).

The Buddha stated that it was only in his teaching that one could find these four noble persons.<sup>2</sup> The meanings of

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Professor Richard F. Gombrich (University of Oxford) for his suggestions which helped me to improve the content of this article. I also appreciate the help given by Professor George D. Bond and the late Professor Edmund F. Perry (Northwestern University) in articulating my initial thoughts into an article.

<sup>2</sup> It is not difficult to understand why Buddhist teaching was so appealing to many sorts of people. It seems Buddhism's diverse ways of presenting many noble stages and persons could embrace a variety of spiritual needs and levels of spiritual development. Buddhism could introduce arahantship here and now for those who came to it seeking no more rebirths. It could offer the stage of non-return for those who came with the aspiration to have an experience in a higher world before attaining the final goal. It could offer the stage of once-return for those who would like to come back to this world one more time to have more experiences as humans before attaining the supreme goal. Finally, it could offer the stage of stream-entry for those who are not really tired of either world but would like to have an assurance of attaining the supreme goal one day. This is also evident from the fact that all the arahants that we find in the Nikāyas are either monks or nuns. There is no reference to living lay